

# PLAIN TALKS

February-March 1987

*Tough times,  
tough people.*



# CONTENTS

Volume 66

Number 2

Commentary	3
Three receive Lifesaving Awards	5
Tough times, tough people	6
1986: A good year for safety	7
Hands of GSU	8
Shareholders unite in group	10
Job offers chance to acquire knowledge	11
PUCT OKs \$39.9 million increase	12
News briefs	13
Mailbox	14

## THE COVER

While the tough times aren't over yet, GSUers are continuing to provide the best possible service within budgetary constraints.

Many employees are taking public and personal stands for the company, as did the two employees in the story on page 13.

On a broader scale, the 1987 Management Conference focused on the company's plans and strategies for the future. That story appears on page 6.

## PLAIN TALKS

February-March 1987

Published for employees and retirees of Gulf States Utilities Company. No portion of the contents of this magazine may be reproduced without written permission of the publisher. Address all communications to PLAIN TALKS, Gulf States Utilities Company, P. O. Box 2951, Beaumont, Texas 77704, Phone (409) 838-6631.

**Executive Editor:**  
Betty Gavora

**Editor:**  
Susan Huff Gilley

**Correspondents:**  
Robert Adams  
Vickie Albert  
Ronnie Bordelon  
Barbara Broussard  
Mamie Burrell  
Debra Cassel  
Myra Castello  
Laurie Cobbs  
Cheryl Crawford  
Lisa Creekbaum  
Betty Dickschat  
Betty Dowell  
Andy Dreher  
Bonnie Duval  
Ella B. Fairley  
Donna Fancher  
Charlotte Gautreau  
Rhonda Haskins  
Connie Herford  
Tina Hunt  
Les Jones  
Lynda Kapalski  
Helen Kennedy  
Clint Lilley  
Audrey McDonald  
Clint Moss  
Sherry Overbeck  
Debra Patin  
Edith Patterson  
Carol Payne  
Myra Ponthier  
Casey Richert  
Mike Rodgers  
Greg Russell  
D.W. Rutherford  
Jeral Semien  
Sue Simon  
Monica Thomas  
David Thornhill  
Jean Tinsley  
Delores West  
Robby Zeringue

Employees who change residences or offices should fill out company mailing-address-change forms (GSU0012-00-81) and return them to the mailroom in the Edison Plaza. GSU publications, departmental mailings and other company information are not automatically forwarded; addresses must be corrected when employees move.



**Editor's note:** This article by Ed Loggins, senior executive vice president, is among special messages from top officers dealing with GSU challenges and strategies for meeting them. Loggins has responsibility for Energy and Planning, Engineering and Technical Services, Computer Applications and Operations. Future Commentary columns will discuss company finances and the future of River Bend.

by Ed Loggins  
Senior Executive Vice President

The past decade may have been a time of amazingly rapid change for Gulf States, but one factor has remained constant throughout our company's 62-year history as an incorporated electric utility.

The customer is still king, and justly plays the most important role in determining our destiny.

Unfortunately, our success is not guaranteed by simply pleasing that customer with a dependable supply of electricity. We must also work with regulators at the state and national levels, while operating within the framework of a changing customer base. Those facts have contributed to our present volatile operating position, but there are some good things about our situation. For instance, our decades-long construction phase has resulted in an ample power supply, and our not-so-new units are well-maintained. But I cannot be quite so confident in describing our fuel supply, because our current cash situation has prompted fuel suppliers to build risk

coverage into their spot-gas bids and sales contracts. Fuels acquisition will no doubt remain a very challenging process for the next couple of quarters.

This development has been especially disheartening, since Gulf States has built a flexible, cost-efficient system with multiple pipelines serving each plant, with several suppliers to each pipeline. Other gas-fired utilities, including Houston Lighting and Power, have modeled their bidding efforts after our process. This process and our pipeline system will serve us well for years to come.

Our transmission system is in relatively good shape for today's needs, although we're delaying expansion of our 500-kilovolt system westward. The delay was necessary to save cash, but we feel that it will hinder our marketing stance in that direction. When we are on our feet again, that will become a high priority.

As for distribution networks, our construction is primarily limited to providing for new customers. Maintenance and tree trimming around lines have been cut, but not eliminated. We won't have the number of dollars and people to devote to maintenance, but we'll try to give the best service we can to our customers.

Challenge will still be the name of the game in our future operations up to the end of this century. We are already wrestling with two problems of the future — cogeneration and open access to transmission lines.

So far, cogeneration has cost us hundreds of megawatts of load and loss of the accompanying revenues. The Public Utility Regulatory Policy Act (PURPA) of 1978 weighted the odds for serving industry toward cash-rich investors. These investors build facilities to serve industrial load in a utility's service area, allowing the industrial customer to



(Continued on page 4)



come and go from the utility, depending upon supply economics. Often the industry is itself the investor in cogeneration. The utility and its residential and commercial customers remain tied to the existing system with its built-in revenue base requirements. As a result, we're in heavy competition for the industrial business, but we're held back by regulation. We're dealing with cogeneration by developing innovative rate structures to hold on to our industrial customers.

At the same time, many industrials are pressing for "open access" — another name for common carrier status for electric company transmission lines. I feel that those industrial customers who want to share our transmission lines consider it a simple matter of a line connecting Point A to Point B. But there's con-

siderably more at stake — reliability, backup, load relay during maintenance and emergencies, contingencies, economic purchases and sales, and the huge investment in planning and building such a system. None of our lines exists independently. Each belongs to a carefully-engineered system designed for specific purposes. If open access becomes more than theory, then we must be ready to deal with the challenge without damaging system integrity and eroding our customer base.

Our Nelson Coal unit will be affected by future acid rain legislation, although we will not suffer as much as Midwestern and East Coast systems that operate numerous coal-fired boilers. Our engineers and environmental experts are following new legislation and trying to help mold it into something workable.

Our service area was one of the last areas in the country to crumble when the recession hit. Unfortunately, it also seems as if we'll be the last to recover. The petrochemical industry is not likely to reach the levels enjoyed in the 1960s and 1970s.

But something good has come out of the bad economic news — our part of Texas and Louisiana, realizing the need to diversify its industrial base, is in hot pursuit of just that goal.

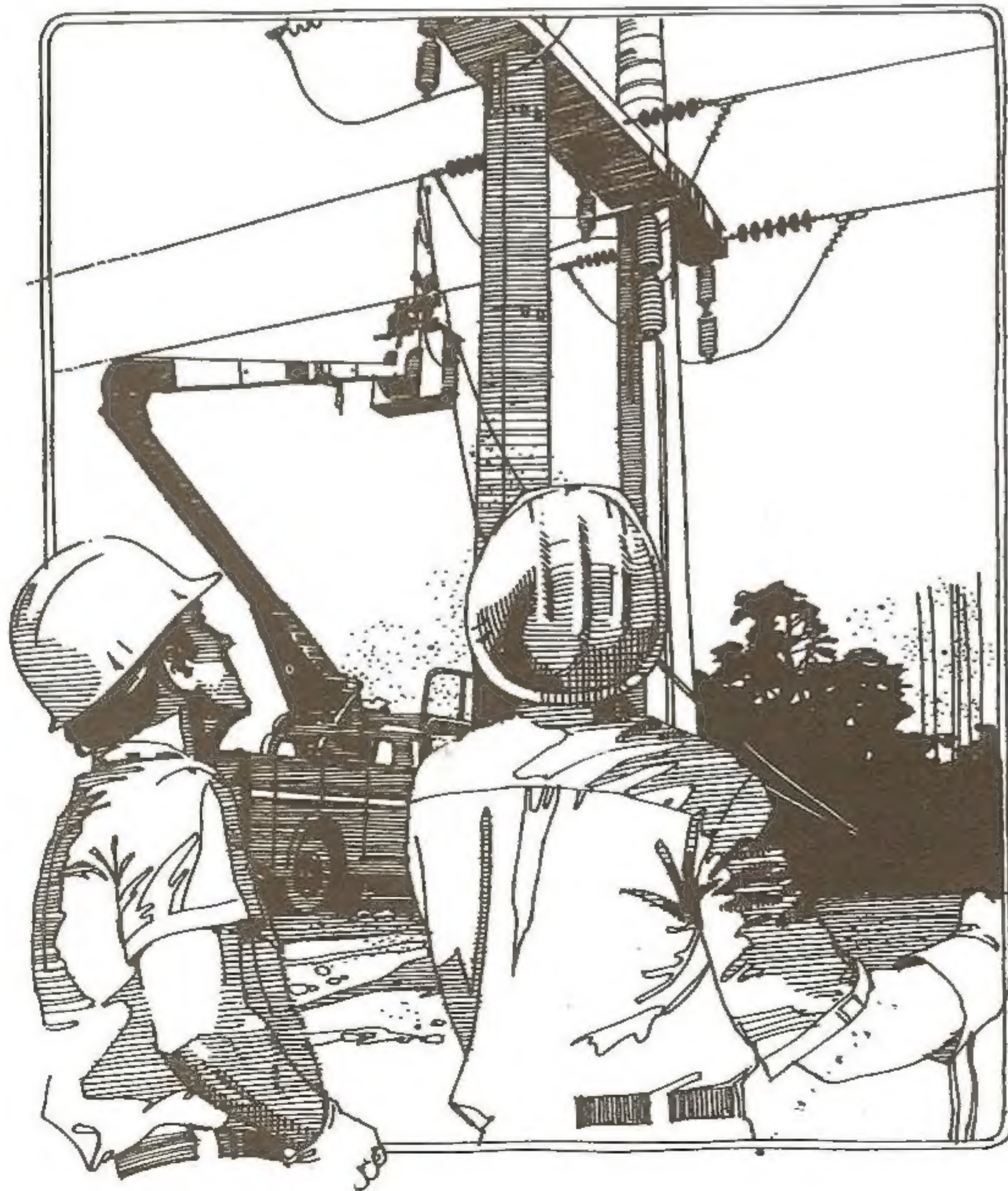
There's plenty of bad news for our operating position today and in the future, but the outlook is not hopeless.

Our future will be enhanced by the planned Louisiana 4A gas turbine and heat recovery steam generator, now under construction, which will supply Exxon's Baton Rouge refinery. GSU is also seeking permission from both state regulatory commissions to proceed with the Nelson Joint Venture project, which will use fluidized bed boilers to burn coke produced by another Lake Charles industry. Both of these state-of-the-art projects will put us among industry leaders in that particular field of technology.

We've already been a leader in utilizing fiberoptic control lines in our Sabine Pipeline project, which was completed in 1984. A Northern utility is using the same equipment to install a commercial communication system over a two-state area.

Heat pumps for industry, homes, swimming pools, commercial water heating and other applications show promise as load-building tools. In that area, we are "sharing strategic planning" with some industrial customers, and plan to expand our efforts to more customers.

Even before GSU incorporated, electricity was emerging as the power of choice. We've got competition and complications built into our business today, but I'm confident that Gulf States will continue to be the supplier of choice for our part of Texas and Louisiana.







*Steven Moore (left of Dr. Linn Draper) and Earnest Francis Jr. show co-workers their awards.*

## Three receive Lifesaving Awards

Three Gulf States employees received President's Lifesaving Awards in late January as a result of two different lifesaving instances.

On Jan. 21, President and Chief Executive Officer Linn Draper presented the first award to Wayne Goff, utility foreman-line in the Beaumont Line Department. The previous fall, Goff had saved a sister-in-law's life by performing the Heimlich maneuver on her when she choked on a piece of meat. The two were at a family reunion.

Goff had attended a GSU first aid class just two weeks before the choking incident.

On Jan. 22, Draper traveled to Port Arthur to present awards to Earnest Francis Jr. and Steven Moore, both of whom are substation mechanics-1st class.

In November, they were working on substation equipment at Port Acres Bulk. As they prepared to leave, they thought they heard someone yelling. When they went to investigate, they found a man pinned under a car. He had been

working on the vehicle when the jack slipped. The two Gulf Staters raised the vehicle, removed the injured man, called an ambulance and administered first aid until it arrived.

At both presentation ceremonies,

Draper commended the recipients, then added that he encourages full participation in the safety program. "Our commitment to safety has not changed, despite the difficult times we face," he noted.



*Wayne Goff accepts award from Draper.*



# Tough times, tough people



*Dr. Paul Murrill*

by Mike Rodgers

**I** think of 1986 as the year of the storms," Dr. Paul Murrill, GSU's board chairman, told those attending the 1987 management conference. Murrill noted that some of those storms, such as Hurricane Bonnie, were a product of nature. Others, he added, were man-made and caused Gulf States many more problems. "One of those storms was a depression, an economic depression caused by falling oil prices at the beginning of the year...The hard economic times created by that depression in the oil patch, I am convinced, are at the core of most of the problems that we are experiencing today with regulatory relief. Our service area is having a tough time. It is the underlying force that is causing a great majority of the difficulties we are having."

Recalling that every challenge last year required tremendous effort and sacrifice on the part of employees, he advised that 1987 will mean that much more hard work lies ahead.

President and Chief Executive Officer Linn Draper noted that the theme of this year's scaled-down, one-day conference was "Tough times, tough people," and commended GSU employees

for being tough during a period when much of the company's activity centers around the need for rate relief. Dr. Draper also took note of the severely-reduced budgets in effect this year. "The number for the capital budget, excluding nuclear fuel in 1987, is \$66.6 million. The capital budget in 1986 was \$352.6 million. The figure for 1987 is the lowest capital budget GSU has had in current dollars since 1967 and the lowest in constant dollars since 1956...We have, in large measure, put construction activities behind us."

Stressing the importance of rate relief, Draper said that if help is not forthcoming, we will have exhausted our cash reserves.

Continuing the budget-cutting theme, Ed Loggins, senior executive vice president-operations, praised the five divisions and the power plants for significant strides in inventory control. "Working together with Materials Management, they have reduced inventory by over \$6 million in the last year. That's a real accomplishment, those are real dollars." Loggins was also enthusiastic about cash savings of \$5 million dollars through refurbishing or selling hardware, fly ash and scrap materials. "Those are big bucks," he noted. "Our people are working lean, smart and safe."

Joe Donnelly's time on the podium was spent, as expected, examining the company's delicate financial situation. Donnelly, senior executive vice president and chief financial officer, offered thoughts on the rate relief granted by the Texas PUC. "It's clear to me that \$40 million of interim increases in Texas will not allow us to get a \$250 million line of firm credit...It's not a question of whether we will exhaust our cash reserves without interim increases, it's only a question of when."

The dark cloud of low fuel prices had a silver lining for Gulf

States customers, according to George McCollough, senior vice president-energy and planning. "The silver lining is that over two-thirds of our natural gas requirements are in the spot market. To the degree that those prices went down, our customers benefited because of the lower fuel cost pass-throughs we achieved."

There are good times and bad times ahead in Gulf States marketing efforts. Calvin Hebert, senior vice president of external affairs highlighted several of the notable successes. One of them, the redeployment of Nelson 7 to Louisiana Station, will expand GSU's steam and electric business there. "It will increase our base revenue by \$8 million, preserve the existing revenues that we currently enjoy from Exxon and allow it to continue as our largest customer."

On the other hand, company advertising on television and in print, will be severely limited this year, a budget necessity which Hebert said will hurt marketing efforts. "We're going to have to find ways to do more with less, until we can afford to use those tools to our advantage again."



*Dr. Linn Draper*





*From left, Floyd Langlois, superintendent-Lewis Creek; Dr. Draper; Ron McKenzie, vice president-Port Arthur Division; and Mike Durham, manager-occupational health and safety.*

## 1986 — A good year for safety

by Mike Rodgers

The coveted President's Safety Award for power plants stayed at Lewis Creek for the second year in a row, announced Dr. Linn Draper, GSU president and chief executive officer, as he presented the 1986 awards. On the division level, Port Arthur Division took home the honors. Dr. Draper pointed out that Lewis Creek employees made it through another year without a single chargeable accident or bodily injury. Lewis Creek was the first plant to win this award in 1979. Port Arthur also exhibited an excellent record with no lost-time accidents and only one

minor vehicle accident.

The President's Safety Award is given on the basis of data on bodily injury accidents as well as avoidable vehicle accidents. For the competition, a rate is set based on the frequency and severity of these accidents, with these combined to establish an overall rate.

The year past was also a very good one for the safety program at Gulf States in other areas. "Our lost-time accident rate was .22 per 200,000 man-hours worked," noted Draper, "a figure that is well below our goal of .35." He added, "While we had one serious electrical contact injury last year, I'm thankful that the injured employee is making a remarkable comeback." GSU reported 11 lost-

time accidents in 1986, compared to 14 in 1985.

Several power plants posted impressive safety records. Neches Station has over 1 million man-hours without a disabling injury, Sabine Station and Willow Glen have over 2 million and River Bend has better than 4 million.

Draper looked at the record of 3.65 chargeable vehicle accidents per 1 million miles driven and compared it to the goal of 3.5. He said, "Clearly we need to place more emphasis on this area of our safety program in 1987." With that in mind, the 1987 goal is a lost-time rate of .33 and a chargeable vehicle accident rate of 3.3.



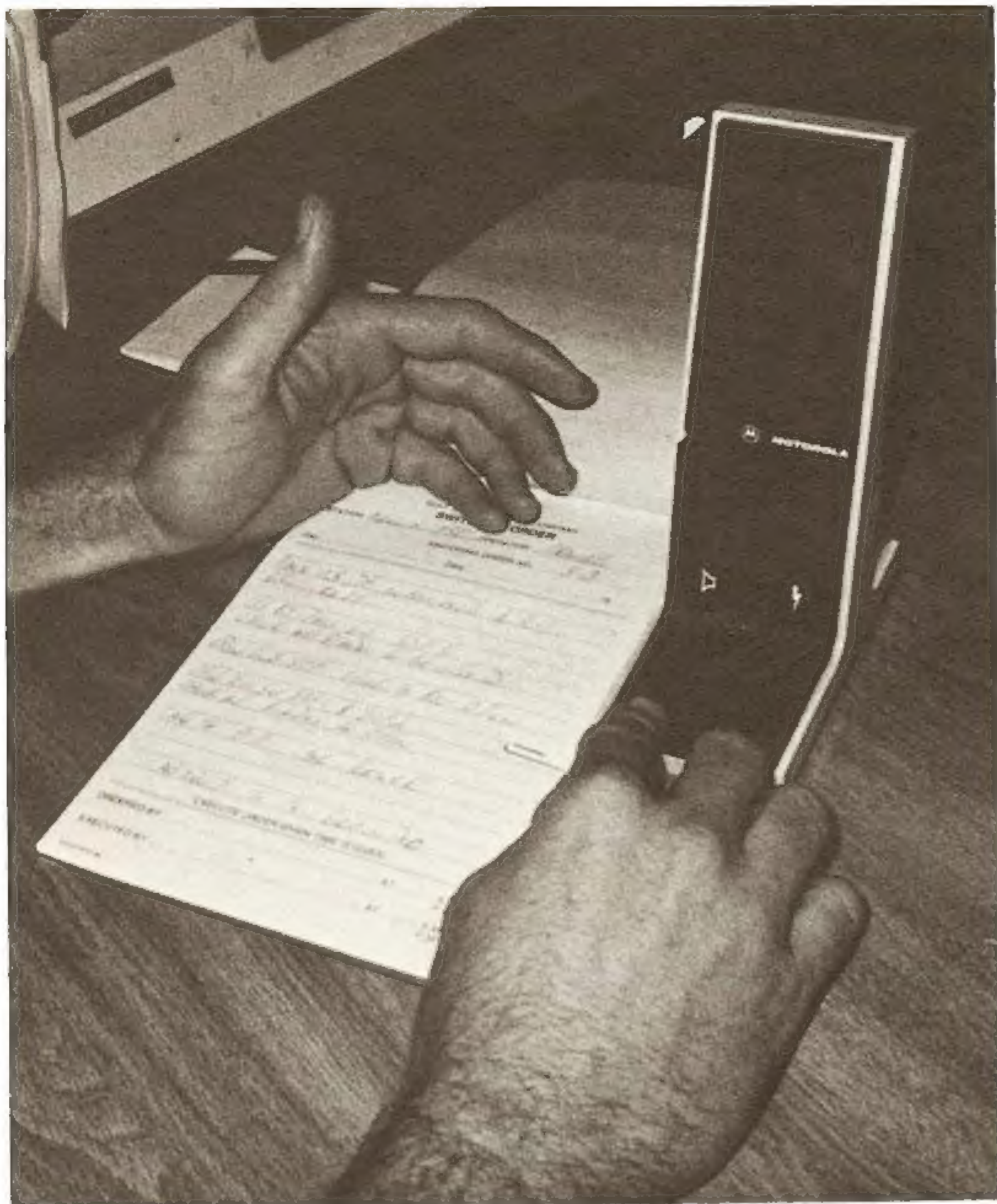


Photo by Audrey McDonald

*James F. Ehlert, district substation operator in Orange*



Photo by Audrey McDonald

*Jo Eubanks, clerk in Orange*



Photo by Edith Patterson

*Carl Fields, storekeeper in Lake Charles*

## Hands of GSU

Our hands are remarkable creations, enabling us to write a letter to a friend, strum a guitar, whip up a chocolate cake, throw a football to a son and caress a baby's cheek.

But not all hands are alike, and for good reason. On the job, the tougher hands may be more suited to climbing poles; the more sensitive ones, to repairing important electronic equipment; the swifter hands, to typing reports.

Some hands are more versatile than others, but all are needed. This photo feature, compiled by *Plain Talks'* correspondents from throughout the company, highlights the many hands of GSU.



Photo by Charlotte Gautreau

*Rex Dunn, lineman-4th class in Gonzales*



Photo by Sue Simon

*Charles Mosley, garage mechanic-1st class, Port Arthur*





Photo by Betty Dickschat

*Gus Gutierrez, serviceman-1st class in Navasota*

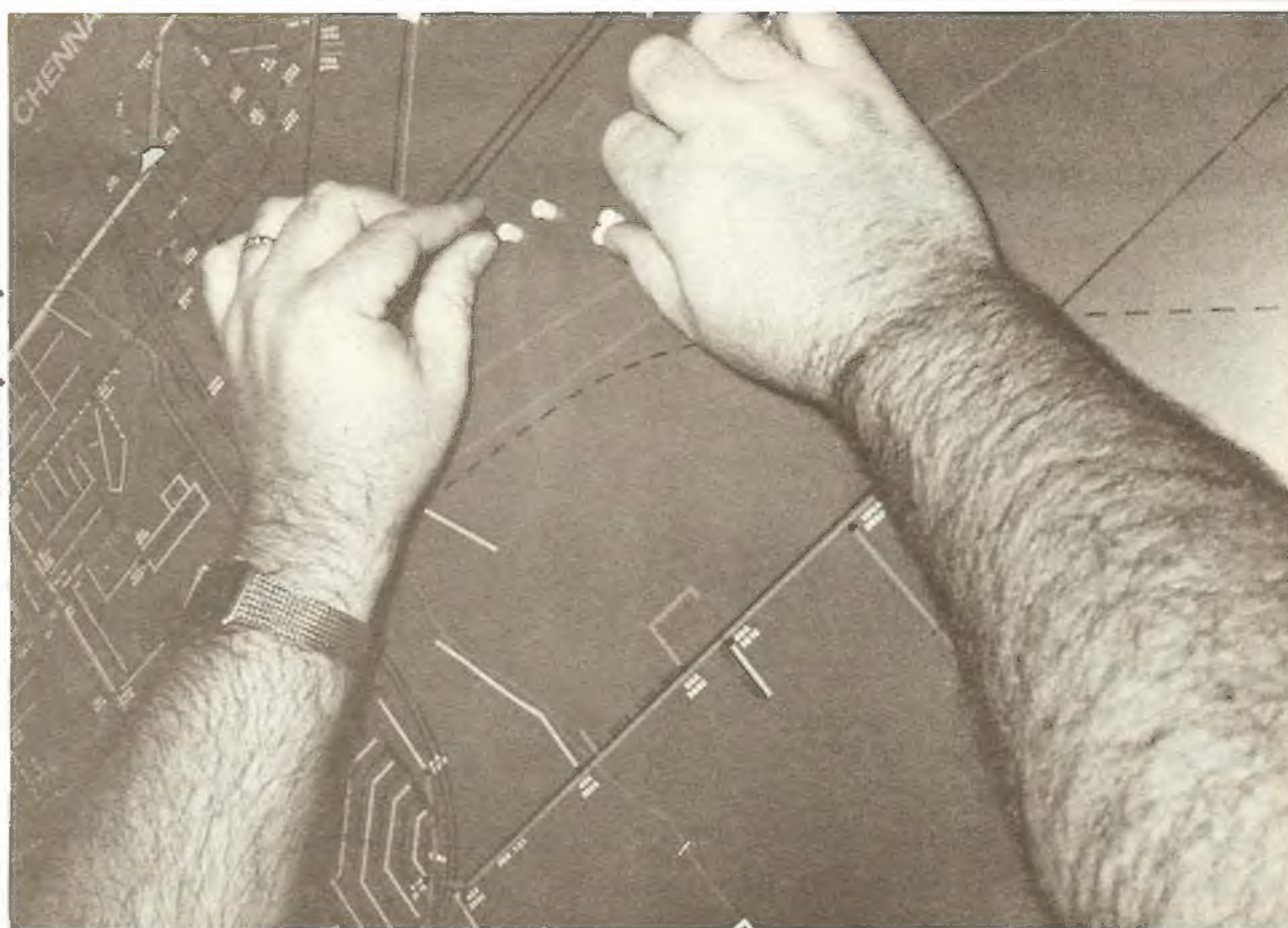


Photo by Edith Patterson

*Sam Crochet, division substation operator, Lake Charles*

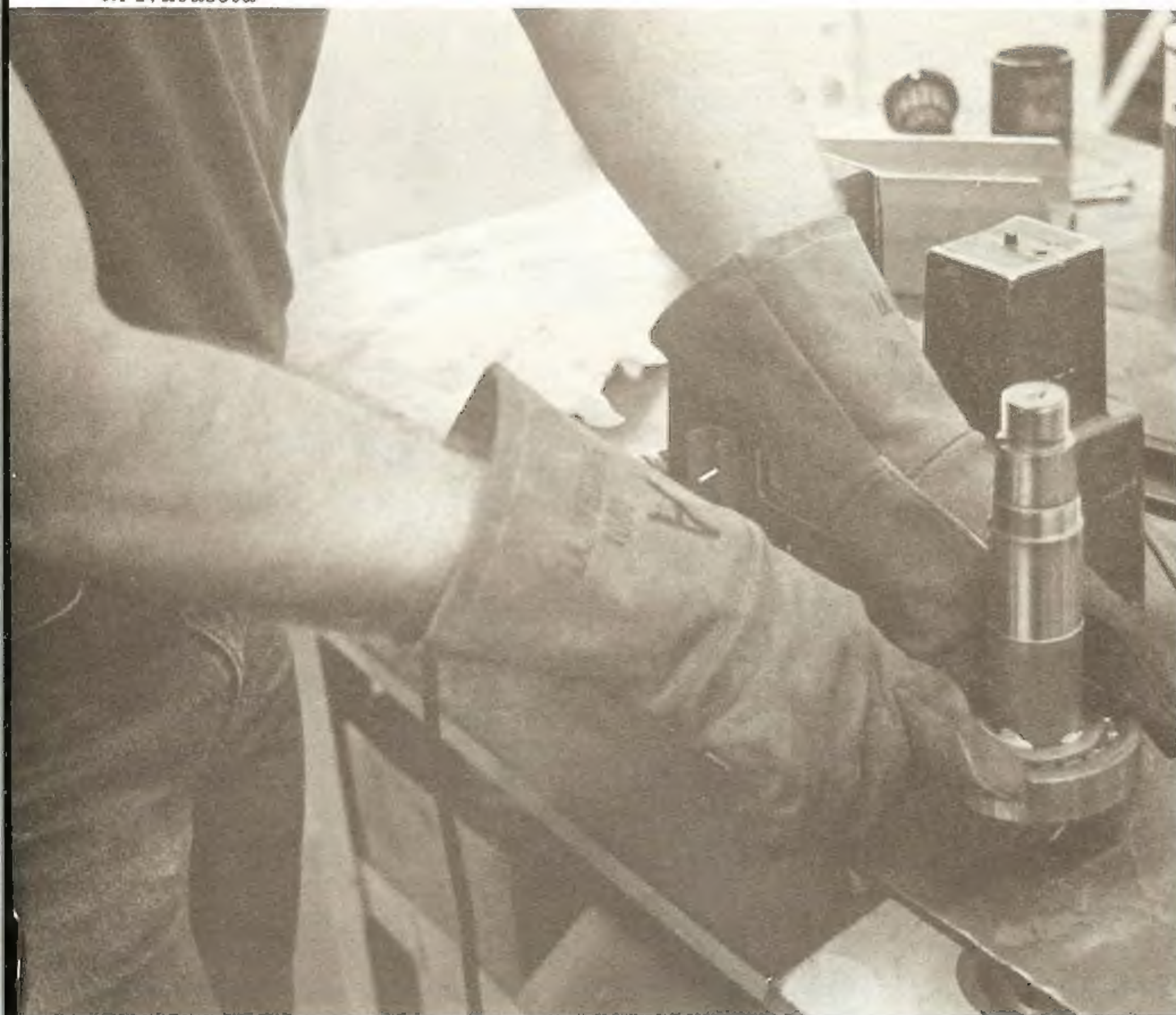


Photo by Betty Gavora

*Dusty Wease, repairman-1st class of Louisiana Station.*



*Susan Simon, meter reader in Orange*



*Barbara Wilkerson, PBX operator in Lake Charles*



*Jackie Ellender, departmental clerk in Lake Charles*



# Shareholders unite in group

by Susan Gilley

Providing a voice for utility shareholders is not an entirely new concept, but spokesmen for the newly-formed Utility Shareholders Association of Texas (USAT) hope the organization fulfills just that purpose.

Floyd R. Smith of Beaumont, who retired in 1978 as GSU's chairman of the board and now chairs USAT, says the non-profit group was chartered to represent utility shareholders' interests before state and federal agencies and administrative bodies, to inform shareholders of issues affecting their investments and to help maintain good relations between its members and utility management.

Ultimately, those goals could lead to an improved regulatory climate, he notes.

The association is open to anyone who holds securities in a Texas utility, either in their own name or a street name, and regardless of whether they live in Texas. The membership fee is \$15 per year.

Smith and another GSU retiree, former corporate secretary Jerry Stokes, were instrumental in forming the group, along with some Houston-area utility shareholders. Stokes now serves as USAT's secretary.

Similar organizations have been formed in California, New York, Michigan and Arizona. The California shareholders' group is perhaps the oldest, having formed in 1975 as a result of what shareholders considered unfair treatment at the hands of state regulators. According to one USAT spokesman, environmental activists were successful in placing a number of initiatives on the California ballot that year. "If they had passed, they would have been harmful to shareholders," he explained. However, the shareholders' association aroused enough voter interest in the issues to defeat the measures.

According to USAT President

John R. Ridgway of Houston, one of the advantages of a group like USAT is that it is separate from the regular corporate organization. "It's made up of ordinary people who have invested their funds in something that they hope will produce income. The fact that you're a shareholder tends to obscure the fact that you're a ratepayer, too," he laments.

Ridgway, a retired Houston Lighting & Power Company executive, feels that state regulators have failed to fully recognize the rights of utility shareholders. "Our aim," he adds, "is to get regulators to consider the idea of reasonable shareholder return in their decisions."

The USAT board met in Beaumont one day after the Public Utility Commission of Texas (PUCT) granted a \$39.9 million emergency rate increase to the company, tied to a number of stipulations. One of the first things USAT hopes to accomplish is to appear before the PUCT on behalf of GSU's permanent ap-

plication for rate relief, expected to be heard this summer. And Smith says the group will explore the possibility of gaining a hearing before the Louisiana Public Service Commission regarding GSU's plant-in-service case in that state, as well.

Smith has even grander designs for the fledgling utility shareholders' group. Noting that most investor-owned public utility companies along the Gulf Coast corridor face similar regulatory and economic challenges, he says, "If we're successful (in Texas), it's entirely possible that we could broaden our membership base beyond the state's borders. Then we could have a greater impact for the benefit of utility shareholders."

Those wishing to join USAT may fill out the membership form on this page, clip it out and send it to:

Floyd R. Smith  
21 Cheska Drive  
Beaumont, Texas 77706

Fill out, clip and mail to:

Floyd R. Smith  
21 Cheska Drive  
Beaumont, Texas 77706

Please print or type.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ TELEPHONE ( \_\_\_\_ ) \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

NAME OF UTILITY IN WHICH SHARES ARE OWNED  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

ENCLOSED is \$15 MEMBERSHIP FEE ( )



# Job offers chance to acquire knowledge

by Susan Gilley

**A**nn Dance Matheny readily admits that her life completely changed last summer.

At the end of July, she faced a new challenge in her career as she left her job as a senior engineering assistant in Baton Rouge to become a senior district service representative in Zachary.

And Matheny became Matheny on Aug. 16 when she married W.T. Matheny, an Exxon retiree she had met through their church, Istrouma Methodist Church.

"After nearly 52 years, I had accepted the fact that I was single, but then the right fellow just came along," she explains.

In the middle of establishing a new home, she also found herself adjusting to new customer contact and marketing responsibilities, along with the more familiar engineering duties. Even so, the ever-optimistic Matheny insists, GSU has always offered her a chance to "continually acquire knowledge."

Matheny has never been one to shy away from a new adventure. She left her north Louisiana home in Arcadia as a young woman to attend business school in Baton Rouge. A friend from her hometown returned after about a week, but Matheny battled her homesickness and stayed with the one-year program. She then spent two years in Bossier City working in the production department of a door plant.

In 1958, she finally gave in to a Baton Rouge relative's plea that she apply for a job in the capital city, and that January she went to work in bookkeeping in the still-brand-new North Boulevard building. Later, she began working in the division's BRECO Credit Union and stayed there until 1974. Matheny relishes her memories of those days. In that job, she reveals, "I dealt with many of the employees, and I felt as if I was really performing a

service." Perhaps because of that commitment, Matheny has continued to serve on BRECO's board of directors and was recently elected board president.

But 1974 signaled an important turn in Matheny's career path.

As a result of a Job Opportunities Program application, she became an engineering helper. Although her first months were spent in an office, she was later assigned to a survey crew. "I had an advantage — I knew most of my co-workers through the credit union," she recalls. "They knew I wasn't taking the job just to make a point, and I knew from the start that I had to do my very best to carry my load."

Perhaps because of such attitudes, Matheny reports, "My tenure in engineering was great."

She credits fellow Baton Rouge employees as having strongly influenced her work life. "They have given me real encouragement."

After a half-year in her new roles, Matheny says, "I really like the small-office atmosphere. If I need to know something about a job or a customer, I only have to walk through the next door, rather than dealing with several different departments."

Matheny considers it her responsibility to give her job her all. "I feel that I owe the company a lot. I don't think I would have gone this far with some companies, considering the level of my education. Because of that, I feel as though I should give GSU my very best."

While she was still in high school in Arcadia, Matheny dreamed of becoming a schoolteacher. Regretfully, money was not available to send her to four-year college.

But Matheny has not nursed those regrets through the years. "Since then, I have been so glad that I didn't become a teacher," she exults.



*Ann Matheny*



# PUCT OKs \$39.9 million increase

On Feb. 3, the Public Utility Commission of Texas (PUCT) granted GSU a \$39.9 million emergency rate increase, less than half of what the company had requested. GSU filed the emergency rate request for \$82 million on Nov. 18, 1986.

GSU President E. Linn Draper said that even though the company felt the amount should have been higher, "we appreciate the fact that the commissioners recognized how desperate our situation is and that we have proven the need for emergency action."

In order to receive the increase, the company must secure a \$250 million line of credit. Draper said it is now time for the Louisiana Public Service Commission (LPSC) to "do its part," referring to the company's appeal of the LPSC's rejection of an emergency rate request on Dec. 2. He added that it is doubtful that GSU can secure the needed credit without rate relief in Louisiana.

The key elements of the PUCT decision include:

- The higher rates can be put into effect when the PUCT staff approves a new set of tariffs and GSU shows that it has made arrangements to borrow the \$250 million.
- Texas customers will receive \$1.50 credit for each \$1 in rate increases as "compensation" for the extra risks the PUCT believes the customers are taking. According to Draper, this amounts to a "pre-disallowance" of some of the costs of River Bend, and could result in Texas customers eventually paying less for the plant than they might otherwise have.
- If GSU goes bankrupt, the increase will be discontinued.
- The increase will be effective in all cities and unincorporated areas served by GSU, although at least one city has indicated it will appeal the issue of the PUCT's jurisdiction.



*Draper responds to reporters' questions just after the decision.*

- The company does not have to refund at the time of the decision about \$11 million in over-recovered fuel revenues and the fixed fuel factor will remain unchanged.
- If no rate relief is granted in Louisiana, the additional revenues

provided by Texas customers are to be used to maintain the quality of service in Texas.

Draper cautioned that a delay in GSU's plant-in-service rate case, scheduled to begin March 23, could result in the company seeking another interim increase.

## Late breaking news:

The Louisiana Public Service Commission approved a \$57 million emergency rate increase for GSU on Feb. 24, by a 3-1 vote, with one abstention.



## Two attend rate hearing

by Susan Gilley

**D**arlene Randall and Sandra Rogers heard the news about GSU's \$39.9 million emergency rate increase in Texas firsthand, although neither works in the Rate Department.

The two Beaumont employees each took 2½ vacation days so that they could attend the Feb. 3 Public Utility Commission of Texas session.

Randall, a senior engineering assistant, explains, "After being here (with GSU) for 20 years, we kind of take criticism about Gulf States personally." Randall observes her 20-year anniversary with GSU in April, while Rogers, secretary-executive, has almost 24 years of service.

In Austin, the pair visited the GSU office, located about a block away from the PUCT building. At a little before 10 a.m. that Tuesday morning, they entered the hearing room and settled into

seats that they later learned were on the "wrong" side.

Randall jokes that the seating arrangement resembles that at a wedding: "GSU (or any other utility) is the groom, but never the bride."

Rogers recalls that as then-PUCT Chairwoman Peggy Rosson began to speak, "I felt very depressed and down, hearing all the adverse remarks about our company." And Randall adds, "I felt like a child being reprimanded." Both women say they were surprised and pleased to learn later that Rosson's remarks did not reflect the consensus of the panel.

A day later, the panel ousted Rosson as chairwoman, replacing her with Dennis Thomas.

The special trip to Austin was the culmination of a months-long defense of the company carried out by Rogers and Randall. Rogers, for instance, attended almost every public hearing on GSU rates held within the immediate Beaumont-Port Arthur area.

Randall says her philosophy has

always been that employees know more about the company than anybody else, and that she should inform others about the facts. When a disk jockey criticized GSU on the air last year, she promptly picked up her telephone and explained the situation to him for about 30 minutes. "He told me he felt much more knowledgeable, but he didn't go back on the air and tell our side," she sighs.

As Randall and Rogers planned their trip, they found that their supervisors supported the idea. Randall works for Mike Cappadonna, staff accountant II, and Rogers reports to Bobby Willis, vice president and controller.



Darlene Randall (left), Sandra Rogers

## McBryde presides over association

Tom McBryde, GSU's operating superintendent-natural gas distribution system in Baton Rouge, was elected president of the Louisiana Gas Association. He succeeds Gaston Horaist of Trans-La Gas Company.

A six-year veteran of Gulf States, McBryde will fill the post until October 1987. LGA membership is made up of private utility companies (distribution and transmission), municipal gas systems, suppliers of goods and services and others associated with the gas industry.

Other officers are Kenneth J. Peart of the City of Eunice, first vice president; Greg Thompson of United Gas Pipe Line Co., second vice president; Rodney

Tabor of ARKLA Gas Co., secretary; and Mark Darby of Entex Inc., treasurer.

According to McBryde, LGA formed in 1980 to exchange and provide information that might be useful in developing engineering, operating and management programs and work practices. The aim is to achieve safer, more reliable distribution, transportation, production and use of natural gas.

## Club honors Port Arthur employee

Robert C. Scott, dispatcher in Port Arthur, was honored by the Royalist Social and Civic Club of Port Arthur for his community work with teen-aged children.

A club representative — Judge Donald Floyd — presented a plaque of appreciation to Scott.

As part of his work with area youth, Scott serves as a disk jockey for dances to help raise money for the club's scholarship program.



Judge Floyd (left), Robert C. Scott



## Cable repaired

Charles Coleman  
Gulf States Utilities  
Zachary, La.

Dear Mr. Coleman:

Early in the morning of Jan. 1, 1987, the three-phase power failed that serves Grace Episcopal Church in St. Francisville. We reported this to the Gulf States trouble desk. Very soon a serviceman arrived and diagnosed the trouble to be a failed underground cable. A line crew was sent up, the cable repaired and service restored very expeditiously.

We observed that the service was not only fast, but it was performed by highly qualified people working with the proper equipment and materials.

We wanted you and the line crew to know that we appreciate very much the excellent service we received.

Sincerely,  
Fr. Ken Rimmick,  
Rector J. Rucker Leake,  
Senior Warden John P. Pillet,  
Electrical Supv.

**Editor's note:** Coleman is a district superintendent, based in Zachary.

## Deer encounter

Louis Sandidge  
Gulf States Utilities  
Navasota, Texas

Dear Mr. Sandidge:

On Sunday, Nov. 2, 1986, my wife and family had an unfortunate encounter with a deer while traveling on Highway 105 between Conroe and Navasota. Thankfully, no one was injured in the accident, but our car was rendered inoperative.

Mr. Mike Rachal, who I understand is an employee of Gulf States Utilities, stopped at the scene of the accident and rendered invaluable assistance to

my family. I am indebted to Mr. Rachal for his kindness and concern for his fellow man, and I wish to commend and thank him through you.

Mr. Rachal's actions to assist strangers in a very stressful situation would in any case reflect very favorably upon Mr. Rachal and Gulf States Utilities. In this case, his assistance was even more critical, because at the time of the accident, I was in Fort Worth at the bedside of my dying father and unable to respond to the situation. It is indeed comforting to know that there are people who will help your family when it is not possible for you to do so.

Please accept my thanks and convey my sincere gratitude to Mr. Rachal.

Best personal regards,  
Charles A. Teague

**Editor's note:** Michael E. Rachal is a lineman-1st class in Navasota.

## Basket story

Plain Talks  
Gulf States Utilities  
Beaumont, Texas

Ladies:

All of us were so pleased to have one of our baskets on the front cover of *Plain Talks* for December 1986. The story about us was great and we appreciate your magazine telling about us.

Our best wishes to all of Gulf States for the coming year because we think you have been and are a big, big asset to our part of Texas.

Sincerely,  
J.C. Swanson,  
President Texas Basket Company

**Editor's note:** Susan Gilley, *Plain Talks*' editor, wrote and photographed the story on the Navasota basket company.

## Appreciates service

Gulf States Utilities  
Baton Rouge, La.

Gentlemen:

On Friday evening, Jan. 16, I noticed that my lights were dimming intermittently, and on two occasions that evening the electricity to my house went out for periods of 10 to 15 seconds. I called Gulf States' emergency phone number and within an hour, one of your service representatives was at my home. He very methodically began to check the electric service and, as there was nothing visibly wrong with the electric meter or the box containing the circuit breakers, your representative left and returned shortly with a service truck. At that time, he replaced the connectors on the utility pole and instructed me to call if I experienced further problems.

The following evening, I did begin to experience the same type of problem and called GSU once again. Within 15 minutes, the same man and another of your employees arrived at my home and discovered shortly thereafter a not-so-obvious problem with one of the main circuit breakers. They explained the problem thoroughly so that I would be able to contact an electrician and have the problem corrected without further investigation on my electrician's part. As a bonus, they managed to temporarily restore electric service to my home.

I regret that I did not obtain the names of these two employees. They were very capable and courteous — certainly a credit to your organization. I hope you will have a record of their names to commend them for outstanding service.

I certainly abhor paying my electric bill each month as much as the next person. But when a problem arises, I want to receive good, prompt service. In fact, I demand it. It is unfortunate, in



my opinion, that GSU has received so much bad publicity in recent months at the hands of Louis Lambert and the Public Service Commission. GSU has served the Baton Rouge area well for many years and I, for one, am hoping that tradition will continue. Perhaps your best weapon, against what appears to be the self-serving claims of Mr. Lambert in order to further his political goals, is the goodwill promoted by employees such as those who came to my rescue over the weekend.

Sincerely,  
Deborah E. Lamb

**Editor's note:** The employees were Wallace Day, serviceman-1st class, and Rodney Sparks, serviceman-1st class, both of Baton Rouge.

## CARE really helps

Dr. Paul Murrill  
Gulf States Utilities  
Baton Rouge, La.

Dear Dr. Murrill:

The board of directors of the Capital Area Agency on Aging was very pleased to learn recently of the milestone reached by the Project CARE program in distributing \$1 million worth of assistance to elderly individuals. Gulf States Utilities is to be applauded for its willingness to establish the program, and for its strong support of Project CARE during its nearly four years of existence.

As one of the agencies which administers Project CARE funds, we are very much aware of the plight faced by many elderly individuals in trying to pay rising utility costs on fixed incomes. The fact that these worthy elderly can receive help through Project CARE is truly a blessing to them.

It is also worth noting the high level of support among GSU employees for the program, as evidenced by their personal pledges and contributions to Project CARE.

One final note: my predecessor in this office was Dianne Brandon, who works as GSU consumer affairs coordinator in Baton Rouge. Ms. Brandon served very ably and capably as president of the Area Agency board in 1986, and we are appreciative of her leadership. We thank GSU for making her available to us.

Sincerely,  
Paul Chivis  
President  
Capital Area Agency on Aging

## Happy customer

Gulf States Utilities  
Beaumont, Texas

Dear Sir:

From the clamor in the newspapers and TV news about what a terrible outfit Gulf States Utilities is, it is time for a longtime customer to speak up. When our family first moved into our home on Gulf Street in Port Neches in 1937, there was no city water or gas. Only Gulf States served the area. All our appliances were and are operated by electricity. Certainly, there have been storms and calamities that interrupted the service. Gulf States Utilities came out to make repairs as soon as possible.

Recently, GSU installed a pole on my side of the street to keep the line from sagging to where tall trucks could yank the line from the outside wall.

I have found through long experience that Gulf States is prompt and efficient, their rates are reasonable and the employees are courteous.

Sincerely,  
Margaret Hanicak

**Editor's note:** The writer sent a copy of her letter to *The Port Arthur News*.

## Super service

Gulf States Utilities  
Lafayette, La.

To all employees of Gulf States:

I would like to thank you for the fine service we received last Wednesday (Nov. 5). During the bad weather, we got quite a bit of lightning, which finally managed to knock out the electricity. We called you and someone came in the rain, late at night, and worked until our power was restored.

I have a child who has croup and asthma, so you can imagine how important it is that she doesn't get too hot.

Thanks again! It takes very special people to work in such weather conditions and I know you are very much appreciated around our neighborhood!

Sincerely,  
Mrs. Rueben Broussard  
Erath, La.

**Editor's note:** Cornell Sonnier, district serviceman-1st class in Abbeville, responded to this call.

## Health help

Sam Richardson  
Gulf States Utilities  
Lake Charles, La.

Dear Mr. Richardson:

Thank you so much for speaking to the Homemaker/Home Health Aides class. Your talk helps to reinforce our classroom lectures.

Your generous donation of time was much appreciated. The Homemaker/Home Health Aides have benefitted from your participation in our class.

Thank you again.

Sincerely,  
Lynthia Piccione  
H/HA Coordinator

**Editor's note:** Richardson is a consumer information coordinator in Lake Charles.



# PLAIN TALKS

P. O. Box 2951  
Beaumont, Texas 77704

Address Correction Requested

BULK RATE  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
Beaumont, Texas  
Permit No. 11

**Safety**  
**first!**

